

ONE PHASE
OF
MISSION WORK AMONG WOMEN
IN
KOREA.



PERSONAL REPORT FOR YEAR 1900-1901.*

MARGARET BEST, PYENG YANG.



I. Evangelistic.

(a) CLASSES HELD OUTSIDE OF PYENG YANG.

During the past year, with some assistance from Koreans, classes for Bible study have been held for women in eight different places outside of Pyeng Yang and visits of several days each have been made to two other places. The classes have been from six to ten days in duration and the *enrolled* attendance has varied from 12 to 123. With the exception of Anak, every district of the work visited last year has been re-visited, and I have held classes in two other places besides, namely, Han Chun and Syen Chyun.

Class at Chu Cha Do. At Chu Cha Do, where two years before about ten or twelve men and women met for Sabbath service in the home of one of their number, a class was held in October. Twenty-four women, eight of whom had been baptized, from seven different villages lying near each other, met three times a day for study in a comfortable little church. We studied the first three chapters of John's Gospel and the women were much interested. Before leaving I asked them to read some of the Gospel every day until they had finished it. A few months later two of the women wrote saying that they had finished it and telling some of the passages that had especially interested and helped them.

Class at Cha San. At Cha San twenty-three women from four different groups attended the class. Eleven of them had been baptized. Besides these twenty-three

*Printed by request.

women who attended more or less regularly, a large number of others came as they were able for a day or two, and on Sabbath the little church was crowded. Two women in this group, of their own accord, have been giving some time to going to the newer groups for the purpose of helping those women newly interested. In this district the opportunities for work among women are many and the need for instruction among those who are interested is great.

Letters were sent out by Mr. Hunt early in December, calling the women of the Chai Ryong and Pong San districts to a class at Pori Tukai, but the class had to be given up because of the advice from Dr. Allen, urging that ladies do not travel in the interior during the time of the threatened movement against Christians and foreigners.

Class at Tomami. At Tomami in February, a class was held nine days attended mostly by young married women and girls. Here the enrolled attendance was seventeen. The young women were bright, and in our interest in the lesson the hour of study frequently lengthened out to two hours. Their knowledge of the Gospels was a good indication of the Scripture study that has been done in this church. It was a disappointment to me that I saw only several of the older women of the church, for there were a number in whom I had been especially interested, and I wanted to meet them again. The inaccessibility of the neighborhood where I stayed probably prevented them from coming to me and kept me from meeting with them on Sabbath at the church, where sixty or seventy of them are said to assemble regularly.

Class at Pori Tukai. The class at Pori Tukai which had been deferred in December, I tried again in March. The average attendance was eighteen, from five different churches. I found that the young women in the Pori Tukai church were learning to read and some among the older women had learned since last I saw them. Here too,

those most regular in attendance were the young married women and girls. An old lady, the single believer in the large city of Pong San, weak and almost sick, walked thirty *li** one blustering cold day to Pori Tukai, hungry to hear again the Old Story and to see a missionary and hear tidings from the different ones who had passed through Pong San from time to time and always stopped with a word of cheer and encouragement for her.

Classes at Han Chun, Chung Wha, and Whang Ju. In April three classes of about a week each were held.

The first, at Han Chun had an enrolment of thirty-three women with an average attendance of twenty-seven. These numbers represent only those who came for study. The number who came only for a short time was much larger. The enrolled women came from ten different groups. It seemed as if the whole country round about were teeming with inquirers.

The second class was held at Chung Wha and had a regular attendance of twelve women, only one of them coming from an outside group. The eleven Chung Wha women were much in earnest. Though they are only fifty *li* from Pyeng Yang, most of them cannot often come to the classes here because they have families of small children. I hope another class may be held there next year.

The third class at Whang Ju, had an enrolment of thirty-eight women, with an average attendance of thirty-two. A large number of women besides, came out of curiosity, a good many of whom stayed and listened attentively. The enrolled women represented seven different groups within a radius of forty *li*. Miss Howell taught singing at Chung Wha and Whang Ju and in many other ways helped to make the trip to those places pleasant and profitable.

The work among the women in the Whang Ju district is

*Three *li*=1 mile.

a large one and a very interesting one. Kim Si who is supported by the Whang Ju churches as a helper, is untiring in her efforts to help the Christian women and I have never known her to miss an opportunity for speaking to believers. She preaches not only by word. Her life in many ways is an example to the women, and there is nothing she will not do for them, from making the church tidy before a service or taking a child from some tired mother's back, to teaching them to read or explaining some passage of scripture that they cannot understand.

Class at Syen Chyun. The last class of the year was held for ten days in May at Syen Chyun. The class, with Helper Nyang in charge, began a day before Mrs. Sharrocks and I arrived, and with the assistance of Mr. Nyang and other leaders in the Syen Chyun church, was continued until June 2nd. One hundred and twenty-three women were enrolled from eight different districts of the North Pyeng An Do work. Five of these came from Sak Ju two hundred and thirty *li* distant, three from Chang Shyung, two hundred and ninety-five *li* distant, sixteen from Eui Ju one hundred and sixty *li* distant, and others came from places nearer Syen Chyun. The women were put into three divisions. The first two divisions, numbering more than sixty women, could all read and made interesting classes to teach. With few exceptions the women of these divisions stayed until the end of the class. Those in the third division began to drop out at the end of the first week.

The women received their first instruction in singing from Mrs. Sharrocks and enjoyed it very much.

Services for the members of the Syen Chyun church and the visiting women were held every evening, lead by Mr. Whittemore or Dr. Sharrocks. The first Sabbath service must have been attended by four hundred or more, probably one hundred and seventy-five or two hundred being women.

On the second Sabbath communion was administered. Four men and nine women received baptism.

Helper Nyang said that if the class next spring were held earlier many more women could attend. More attended this class than were expected, the estimate having been placed at about fifty. If the attendance were to increase other quarters would have to be provided and the teaching force increased.

The class showed that the interest in the north is widespread; that the women are eager to learn, many of those in the first two divisions having considerable knowledge of the Gospels, though no special instruction has ever been given them; and that there is need for some one who shall be free to devote a large share of her time to work among the women of the churches near and beyond Syen Chyun.

Work at Suk Chun. On the way home I stopped for four days with the women of the Suk Chun church. Regular classes for study could not be held all the time, although there were plenty of women who would have liked to study. There was such a continuous stream of visitors at the church that a good part of the time was spent in talking with them. Christian women in companies of half a dozen or more came from villages sixty, forty, thirty, and twenty *li* away, and on Sabbath the attendance of both men and women must have been nearly two hundred.

Kim Si of Sa San and Cho Si of Suk Chun have worked among the women of that section and have been the instruments in leading many to a desire to become Christians. They are both good earnest women and in positions where they may do much for the cause that is so dear to their hearts.

Character of the Work. At the request of the church leaders and the women themselves, the teaching in these classes has been confined largely to

the Gospels. In some places where the women are more advanced, an outline life of Christ, lessons from the Acts, and Philipians, have been taught.

In making this report of work in the country I have mentioned numbers always, not because I put trust in them, but because they help one to a better understanding of a condition of affairs very difficult to describe.

Not all who have attended the classes are what we would like to have them be. Some are weak and find it hard to live the new life; some are so ignorant that they hardly know why they have come to us; some are ambitious to gain a reputation for knowledge of the Bible; but most of them come together to study the word of God because they know that in it are the words of eternal life and that it is the rule of their faith and practice. And in the quiet, heart searching hours of study when they are thinking only of the message that God's word brings to them, the weak some times receive strength to overcome, the ignorant receive enlightenment, the ambitious have their pride broken, and in its place a desire created to learn God's will and to do it, and the sincere and humble hearted receive comfort and power and a knowledge of God's will that enables them to enter more and more into the Higher Life. It is worth while. The failures and weaknesses of some only serve to reveal more plainly the marvels of God's grace in the characters and lives of others.

Advance on last Year. In comparing the work of this year with that of last year, I have wondered where the advance might be. For one thing, there has been an increase in the numbers of those enrolled, the highest attendance at any one time last year being twenty, while this year the Whang Ju and Han Chun classes numbered thirty-eight and thirty-three. The Syen Chyun class with its enrolment of one hundred and twenty-three took its place by the side of the classes held here in Pyeng Yang. The

number of those who can read is constantly increasing. At every class the majority, if not all, of the women have been able to take part in the reading. The women are growing in knowledge, asking more intelligent questions than they used to ask. I have noticed a difference, too, in the way some of them present the truth to unbelievers. They seem to have lost some of the fervor of the earlier days but none of the earnestness, and talk with much more intelligence and judgment. In habits of personal neatness and in the care and training of their children the change is beginning to come. Little by little the new ideas, so strange to them at first, are gaining a power over them, until now there are women who are filled with repentance after they have given a child an impatient blow, and there are even those in whom repentance has worked better things.

A Woman helper. The Korean woman who has accompanied me on these trips is Pak Si, known to most of her friends as the "mother of Gan nie." Through all kinds of weather and in all sorts of places, some of them not at all comfortable even from a Korean point of view, with an utter forgetfulness of self, in her love for the work, she has always shown herself ready to do what she could. The women love her and listen to her. Her heart is in the work. If the station approve I should like permission to have her for a helper, especially for the country work.

Request for new Worker. With the growth of the work and the increase of opportunities, comes the question of new workers, and in this connection I should like to express the hope that the mission from the reinforcements this year will assign a single lady to Pyeng Yang.

(b) TRAINING CLASSES IN PYENG YANG.

I have had a share in the teaching in the two regular training classes in Pyeng Yang, teaching the second divi-

sion in lessons from the Gospels. Both of the classes were well attended, the spring class, which numbered about one hundred and twenty, being the largest yet held.

Course of Study. At Mrs. Lee's suggestion, the station appointed a committee to prepare a course of study for use in these classes. A graded course for five years was prepared, consisting of the study of the native character, selected studies from the Gospels, The Acts, the Epistles and Psalms, the Life of Christ, Old Testament studies, and the geography of Palestine, together with the reading at home of specified tracts and the memorization of certain Psalms. The station approved the course and ordered one thousand copies of it printed for use in the women's classes and also for beginners in the country churches.

With this course for a working basis, a strictly kept roll of attendance, and advancement in the course conditional on passing examinations, it is hoped that the work of the classes may be gotten better in hand and be made more and more profitable.

Special Class in January. These two classes held for ten days every fall and spring are opened to all baptized and catechumen women in the country churches. Knowing that among these women were a few, who, with more instruction than it is possible to give them in other classes where they are with women of various degrees of advancement, could be of great help to the women of their own churches, I asked and received permission of the station to invite them to Pyeng Yang for twenty days of Bible study in January. Eight women came. Mrs. Moffett gave them ten lessons in the form of Bible readings on the subjects of sin, salvation, baptism, etc; Mrs. Baird taught them the Epistle of James and part of Philippians; Mr. Chou took them each day for a lesson in Mark; I gave them eight lessons from the Gospels on the subject "Christ our Ex-

ample," and had them three-quarters of an hour each morning for prayers in our home. I also gave them several lessons on the geography of Palestine.

Besides the regular study they had the benefit of the evening meetings held during the Week of Prayer and three Sabbath services in the Pyeng Yang church.

One object being to acquaint them as much as possible during their short stay with the work in Pyeng Yang, they were encouraged to attend the regular services and classes held for women. They were taken to visit the girls' schools, and some of them accompanied Mrs. Moffett's helper in her work of house visitation.

They were all baptized women, Christians of several years' standing. All could read. They were invited to the class because they seemed to be women who gave promise of being able to help other women to a better knowledge of the Gospel in their homes and in the communities where their lots are cast.

I have had opportunity since to see four of the women in their own homes, and know that the confidence was not misplaced. The work of three of them has been referred to in this report.

The women paid about four yen of the expense of the class, some of the station assuming the large part of it, which amounted to twenty-two yen and fifty-two sen.

I should be glad to see the class held again next winter, making the effort to have the women bear a larger share of the expense and asking the Board for the appropriation of a small sum, which the station shall approve, to be used in a few cases where those invited are not able to bear their expenses entirely or in part.

(c)

SABBATH-SCHOOL CLASS.

My Sabbath-school class of young women at Sa Chang Kol has grown to number thirty-three with an attendance of

between twenty and twenty-five. One young woman died last winter, happy in her new faith. She had learned to read well and found much pleasure in the Gospel stories and teachings. One has been missed from the class, since Sabbath morning study is conducted at her home in the Way Sung, and she now attends there.

Several of the young women spend part of their time with their parents or parents-in-law in the city, and the remainder with their parents-in-law or parents in the country, so that the attendance varies a great deal at times. One of these, whose husband lived in a village where there were no Christians, has had the happiness of seeing him and all his family become Christians within the last year.

II.

EDUCATIONAL.

The girls' school at Sa Chang Kol has had this year an enrolment of twenty-eight with an average attendance of fifteen.

Early in the fall the children were divided into three classes and a definite course of study, designed to cover six years, was provided. A trial of the first three years of the course shows that it is not full enough in the second and third years, and that more will have to be added. Since January Miss Howell has taught singing, to the delight and profit of the girls.

The teacher has attended Mr. Baird's Monday evening class for teachers, and has shown herself capable of putting into practice in the school the things learned at the class, with the result that the order is much better than formerly and the work much more systematic. This summer I have been spending two mornings each week with her in arithmetic and the advanced geography, with the expectation that she will be able to teach those subjects to the girls in case no missionary is able to do it.

Work of the Committee. A committee of three Koreans from the Pyeng Yang church was appointed to assist in the management of the school. In October the committee had a meeting with the parents of the children, at which they made certain suggestions in regard to regularity of attendance, punctuality, etc. The suggestions were taken in good part, and the results were gratifying, though there is something still left to be desired in the matter of regular attendance and punctuality.

The committee have attended to purchasing the fuel, having collected from the parents the sum of eighty-six nyang (between 13 and 14 yen, or about \$7.00 American gold).

The fuel for the year cost sixty-two nyang and five cash, leaving on hand a balance of twenty-three nyang and ninety-five cash. The teacher's salary of a little more than three yen per month, has been paid from mission funds, and for slight repairs on the school room I have paid about one yen.

The committee favor raising the teacher's salary to twenty-five nyang per month (about four yen at the present rate of cash), and have suggested that they call a meeting of the parents just before school opens in September, to ask them to contribute the extra five nyang per month, and also to contribute for fuel supply the coming year.

Nine new pupils have entered during the year whose names were on the roll up to the time school closed. A number of others entered but stayed only for a short time, and their names have not been counted in the enrolment. They were the children of parents who perhaps had attended services only a few times and had been enough interested to send their children to the school. If the teacher or I had had time to pay more attention to the parents, we might perhaps have kept the children and, in some cases, the parents from falling away. I have had time to make only a few visits

in their homes. I shall be glad to have a helper who can assist in looking after those women who are connected through their children with the school, and also in the Sabbath morning Bible study class.

Miscellaneous.—During the intervals between country trips and classes in Pyeng Yang, I have had some time to work with my literary assistant, Mr. Chou. He has assisted me in preparing work for classes, in teaching in two classes, in writing letters, in trying some translations for the *Christian News*, and occasionally in study of the language.

The secretary work of the station and home duties have helped to fill the remainder of the time.

American Presbyterian Mission,

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